

RESEARCH MENU 2010

<p>Ms Anja Botha</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and Resilience • Child and Family Development • Student engagement (only as co-supervisor)
<p>Dr Luzelle Naudé</p>	<p>PROJECT 1: Teaching of Psychology: Student Access and Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to higher education institutions • Transformation in higher education institutions • Students' experiences of higher education • Factors influencing academic success • Bridging and extended programmes • Student support <p>PROJECT 2: When campus and community collide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The influence of civic engagement on students' learning and development • The influence of community interventions on the community • Service-learning • The use of reflection as learning strategy <p>PROJECT 3: Adolescent and student development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive, psychosocial, moral and emotional development • Stress related issues • Risky sexual behaviour / HIV Aids related aspects • Academic performance • Motivation / Future time perspective • Career planning
<p>Prof Paul Fouché</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychobiographical research (this refers to single case, qualitative, life-history research into the uncovering of the psychological dynamics and personality development in the finished lives of unique, great, exemplary and / or extraordinary individuals in the world of politics, warfare, science, medicine, literature, arts, music, philosophy and extreme psychopathology). Preferably these individuals should be South African born. • Quality of life and the psychofortology in the lives of patients living with psychosomatic and psychophysiological disorders (examples of these disorders are: psychological infertility; migraine headaches, peptic ulcers; CHD; diabetes; endometriosis; irritable bowel syndrome; chronic fatigue syndrome; etc). • Clinical Health Psychology: Biographical status, well-being and quality of life of adult patients utilising Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Prof Anet Louw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘n Onderzoek na sielkundiges se metodologie/kriteria in die evaluering van seksuele molestering. • ‘n Onderzoek na sielkundiges se opleiding/kundigheid in die assessering van seksuele molestering • Die belewenis van vaders wat valslik van seksuele molestering beskuldig word in egskeidingsake • Analisering van bestaande datastel: Temas uit die Roberts Appersepsie Toets vir Kinders • ‘n Onderzoek na die voorkoms van aantygings van seksuele molestering in egskeidingsake
Prof Dap Louw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forensic Psychology / Ethics
Prof Roelf van Niekerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychobiographical research (single case, qualitative, life-history research focusing on the psychological development and contributions of extraordinary individuals in the world of art, business leadership, literature, medicine, music, philosophy, politics, science, sport, and warfare).
Mr Edwin Du Plessis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Substance abuse and dependency • Trauma therapy • Suicide among teenagers en young adults • Stress and burnout among helping professions • Cross-cultural Psychology
Mr Ancel George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide • Stress-related topics • Positive Psychology: Coping and related topics • Adolescent coping and resiliency • Adolescent well-being • Marital well-being
Ms Lindi Nel (co-supervision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative studies • Single case-studies • Positive Psychology • Therapeutic techniques/interventions • Teaching of psychology
Ms Pravani Naidoo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology of Disability • Positive Psychology • Therapeutic horse riding • Qualitative research

<p>Ms Florence Tadi (co-supervision:)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forensic psychology • Marital well-being
<p>Dr Stephen Walker (UNIBS)</p>	<p>Experimental Psychopathology: Determining the cognitive processes involved in the development of pathological conditions (particularly anxiety, eating and mood disorders; behavioural difficulties amongst adolescents). Here cognitive and metacognitive processes such as worry, perfectionism, emotional avoidance, intolerance of negative emotions and rumination are of particular interest.</p> <p>Cognitive Therapy Theory: Topics related to more theoretical aspects of cognitive and behavioural therapies. I am currently interested in developing a cognitive theory of human strengths, resilience, mental toughness in athletes etc.</p> <p>Health Psychology (specifically medical psychology) Topics related to the experience of living with a chronic condition, e.g. diabetes, chronic pain etc. particularly amongst adolescents.</p> <p>Topics related to health maintenance e.g. weight loss, increasing adherence to exercise and treatment regimens etc.</p> <p>Both abovementioned fields of study are approached from a phenomenological perspective making use of Interpretive Phenomenological analysis as a method of inquiry.</p> <p>Topics related to the role of personality in health promotion or high-risk health behaviours (specifically within the context of the Big Five conceptualization of personality).</p>
<p>Prof Adelene Grobler (UNIBS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent studies • Motivation, self determination and future time perspective • Educational progress and achievement (focus on mathematics)
<p>Ms Melody Mentz (Centre for Student Engagement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Engagement (success and pass rate)

<p>Dr Roelf Beukes (Research fellow)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning disabilities • School readiness • Child development • Under-achievement • Positive Psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Psychological well-being ○ Spiritual well-being ○ Life satisfaction ○ Happiness ○ Resilience ○ Emotional Intelligence ○ Gratitude ○ Coping ○ Forgiveness ○ Connectedness to nature ○ Sense of meaning <p>I am willing to discuss any meaningful topic.</p>
<p>Prof Anda Le Roux (Research Fellow)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents' attitudes towards their fathers: Adolescents' Attitudes towards their fathers: a cross-cultural study • Loneliness studies among adolescents, the elderly, the sick, married people etc. • Attitude studies, attributions. • Social psychological studies, including the underlying processes of relationships • Religious studies

GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

A comprehensive research project, focussing on risk and resilience in adolescents, will be conducted during 2010. Students interested in topics involving the social and personal factors that influence the health and well-being of adolescents, are invited to participate in the project. Every student participant will choose one dimension of the broader topic to focus on such as *“The influence of exposure to violence on the resilience of adolescents ”*, *“The influence of electronic communication on the social support experienced by adolescents”* and *“The influence of peer group support on suicidal behaviour”*. All students will assist with the data gathering for the broader topic by gathering data from approximately 150 secondary school pupils. Research supervision will take place in group sessions as well as in individual supervision consultations. Project meetings will take place on a regular basis to guide students through the literature study, research method, chapter, results and conclusion chapters. Six lecturers will participate in the project including Dr H S van den Berg, Dr Pravani Naidoo, Dr Roelf Beukes, Mrss Sandri Burger, Anja Botha and Lindi Nel as well as Mrr Edwin du Plessis and Ancel George. Only seven students can be accommodated on the project. Notify Dr H S van den Berg (vdberghs.hum@ufs.ac.za) by 9 October 2009 if you are interest in the project.

Risk and Resilience in adolescents

Abbreviated Research proposal: Group Research Project

Today's youth will form the backbone of tomorrow's society and will play a pivotal role as leading agents of transformation in our society. Rapid societal changes and the technological explosion place increasing demands on adolescents leading to inordinately high level of distress among many teenagers. Yet, many adolescents succeed in managing the increasing demands with success and mature into responsible adults that make a valuable contribution to society. The focus of this project will involve an investigation of the risk and resiliency factors that influence the incidence of health-compromising or threatening behaviour such as substance abuse and suicidal behaviour on the one hand and health enhancing behaviour that promote the well-being of adolescents. The specific objectives of this research project focus on the investigation of socio-political, cultural and economic transformation changes experienced by adolescents and the influence of these changes on their psychological adjustment well-being.

The incidence of suicidal behaviour and substance abuse among South African adolescents is inordinately high (Schlebusch, 2005). Dramatic changes in the adolescent's social environment are often blamed for the increase in psychological and social problems that have been noted in youth risk surveys (Reddy et al.,2002). At a social level increased social disintegration give rise to a reduction in the extent of adult support and guidance available to teenagers. Factors such as a stronger focus on materialistic values rather than family values, family and marital dissolution which erode the security within the family, reduced contact with members of the extended family and an increase in Aids-related deaths, which implies that teenagers are exposed to the loss of important social resources from an early age are often cited as factors contributing to an increase in health risks such as substance abuse and suicidal behaviour (Center for Family and Demographic Research, 2003). The significant increase in exposure to electronic communication media also influence adolescents' social and emotional adjustment significantly. At the macro-social level, the role of globalisation, increased competition for jobs and other resources within the world market and a loss of traditional values are identified as factors contributing to a sense

of hopelessness among adolescents from many developed and underdeveloped countries. South Africa's past history of apartheid and the ongoing process of socio-political transformation further add to elevated levels of stress which could potentially contribute to self-destructive behaviour. With this project the researchers aim to develop a better understanding of adolescent risk behaviour in the post-apartheid context and to identify potential protective factors that serve as potential buffering factors.

The following research questions will guide the research project:

- What is the incidence of high risk behaviour such as substance abuse and suicide reported by the participants and how does the incidence differ across gender, race, socio-economic and geographic groups?
- What are the nature and extent of the stressors adolescents are exposed to in their family, school and community environment?
- What are the resources they have access to and to what extent do these resources (personal resources including self-esteem, sense of coherence, optimism and hope as well as the availability of environmental resources such as material and social resources, including family support, peer group support and support by teachers) enable them to deal with the demands they are exposed to?
- Which coping strategies do adolescents use to deal with the stressors they are exposed to?
- What are the impact of the different stressors, resources and coping strategies on the adolescents' risk for self-harming behaviour such as substance abuse and suicidal behaviour?
- What are the impact of demographics variables such as race, gender and socio-economic status on the stressors, resources, coping strategies of the adolescents?

Research method:

A stratified random sample including 1200 grade 9 to 11 learners from the Northern Cape, Free State and Western Cape will be included in the study (400 learners per province). In every province 6 schools, representing urban and rural areas as well as high, middle and low socio-economic groups, will be included in the survey. Permission to conduct this survey will be

requested from the respective education departments. The informed consent of pupils, parents and school principals will also be obtained before participation in the project. The participants will be demographically representative of the South African society. Data will be collected with standardised psychometric tests that will be administered during school days at the identified schools. The questionnaires will be bound in booklet form and pupils will complete the questionnaires in groups of about 20 under the supervision of field workers who are registered psychometrists. The field workers will debrief learners after the administration of the questionnaires to address any emotional responses or questions that result from involvement in the research process. Testing will take about two hours, and will be interrupted by a 30-minute break. Upon completion of the test procedure, the responses will be encoded and processed individually.

The following measuring instruments will be used to gather the data:

The *Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire for Adolescents* (Reynolds, 1999), which evaluates the frequency and intensity of suicidal thoughts and behaviour.

The *Social Stressors and Resources Questionnaire (Youth Form)* (Moos & Moos, 1994) will be used to evaluate stressors and social resources.

The adolescents' preference for the use of different coping strategies will be measured by means of the *COPE Scale* (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989).

Intrapersonal resources will be measured by means of the following measuring instruments:

The *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire* (Rosenberg, 1965), to measure self-esteem and the *Hope Scale* (Snyder et al., 1991) to measure the sense of hope.

Open ended questions focussing on the influence of factors such as crime, economic pressures, political insecurity, electronic media and intergroup relations on the stress and well-being experienced by the participants, will be included in the biographical questionnaire.

All the above-mentioned questionnaires have already been used in several South African investigations and have proved to be reliable and valid for use with South African high school pupils.

Data will be statistically analysed with a multivariate statistical programme including analysis of variance to investigate differences between learners from different provinces as well as the different race, gender and socio-economic groups. A regression analysis will be conducted to determine the influence of the different stressors, resources and coping strategies on the risk for suicidal behaviour reported by learners. The responses to the open ended questions will be analysed using the NUDIST* computer programme to do a thematic analysis of the data. A statistician specialising in multivariate analysis in the social sciences will be used to support the researchers in the analysis of the data.